

Relatively Speaking and Otherwise:


A Poetic Endeavor

Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely of the Thesis Director, is written over a horizontal line.

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Relatively

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Dance

Hot sounds drip
around us as your
arms suspend me--
Weightless. Breathless.
Soft lights reflect
red, yellow, green
in the highlights of your
hair. Swaying against
you, with you, a chorus
of nightingales streak
beneath my skin to pierce
my teeming heart. Entangled
couples surround us; we pull
closer for protection.
The music swells
as my soul explodes
into a kaleidoscope
of flashing heat.

Silly Putty Love

Twisting, pulling, pounding flat--
I've molded you into my insecurity;
Three arms, four legs, one dot
for an eye that mocks me;
Big feet, small hands, and thick,
dangerous fingers that enjoy
the feel of my fear. Quietly,
I stroke your lumped-on arms;
Oh, how they've held me
for so long. I want to be free
of this twisted love affair--
free to run, and dance, and
live. free to be me, without
you. finally and completely.

Comfort

I wear your sweaters
late at night when no-one's
around to wonder why.
Those oversized, out-of-fashion,
old-men-only cardigans with stretched
buttonholes from years of use
and your big belly pushing up behind
them. I feel closer to you
when I seek shelter in those kind
knit walls. Shelter from numbing
pain, aching loss, and desperate
thoughts. Shelter that allows me
to join you in that shared skin
of soft cotton colors
and memories of gold.

Waiting

to see if they'll rip
you from my arms, tear
you from my side
to put you on THE FRONT LINE.
Fear streaks through my veins
like a dripping razor--I struggle,
unable to stop the flow.
Days pass, and still I battle
relentless, numbing pain.
I stagger through,
blinded by tears and love
for you, for us, for all
touched by Hell's playground.
"Allied bombings-"
"Ground assault-"
"Chemical warfare-"
they talk on and on, grinding
my heart into limp, fragile bits.
The brutalized POW's dance
nightmare attacks in my sleep,
as your face twists in their place.
Every account of KIA's
sends the razor running faster,
taking the last of my strength.
Helpless,
I try filling my time with meaningless
tasks, too weak to face this faceless
fear of losing my chance for a life
with you.

A Prayer at Dinner

Sirens explode, shattering
the quiet, thick air of night.
Wailing women grab
wide-eyed children, pulling
them close to heaving
breasts of fear. Green and black
masks like funny party hats sparkle
in dawn's too early light.

We watch this from across
the globe--brought into our living
rooms during dinner. We see
buildings torn and blood
of late-night attacks smeared
on concrete. We see
footage "Cleared By Israeli
Censors" of Patriots
making falling Scud stars
for all to make frenzied
wishes upon.



Scenes from High School

8 am: Morning's rush to catch
a glimpse of HIM! Slyly
slipping down the red-
lockered senior hall, a freshman,
desperate, eager, silly.
There! Blonde hair,--tall
boy--big blues, so cool!
Ah, he smiles and I about die!
Bell sounds--I float to class. . .

10:30 am: German hour, but far
away writing letter #3. Spotted--
I try ditching it. I'd rather eat
it than give it to teacher. Brave!
HE pokes his laughing head
in the door window--oh, god!
Flush!--Tingle!--Giggles
all around. 80 decibel
heartbeat as I write
his name on my folder over
and over and over. . .

12:45 pm: Banging, yelling, chairs
scraping the tile in the lunchroom,
crowded tables with books
overflowing. He sits close
to me. My throat's so tight,
I can hardly swallow. Ham
and cheese with mustard
is not very seductive--
the bread sticks in my teeth.
Oh, I hope he doesn't
notice! The time speeds by--
damn, what a great guy!
I think he likes me. . .

2:15 pm: Suddenly my stomach drops--
panic trying to look cool. HE's
walking down my hall now!--His
head miles above the others. He's
out early, just wanted to say
goodbye, give me a letter, and scribble

Got up - JW
in red marker on my gray
locker door. He'll call me later, and
he's gone. I fly squealing
down the hall, "Julie! Julie!--
OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!--"
Scarlet faced, heart embraced,
that last class only a blur.
I can't WAIT! for tomorrow. . . !

Grandmother

Her smell is old and tired as she shuffles aimlessly about the room. My heart aches at her loss of life's fire. Unable to do much, she begs her way into my private times, crowding me with stories of dead relatives or their troubles in life. On and on, she leads me to nowhere. I feel her desperation as she clings to my connection with life. The weight of her soul burdens me. I cannot give to her the youth, the strength, the life force she wants for herself. I cannot save her from the pain or the end; I can only love this beaten woman as I love the fire of life.

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I smell
the air,
hard and white, of autumn's leave, welcoming winter's
chill.

I tremble,
wanting
to know the touch of your lips on my hungry skin;
to have
your strong arms enclose me--safe.

I weep
tears
of dead leaves
falling
from a
tree's
grasp.

January

White trees, frozen
in time, send snarled fingers
into the lapis sky.
All around, delicate mounds
of snow
shimmer
with reflected power.
I watch
as silent clouds
of breath
float away from me.
Drifting,
in this white paradise,
a cool peace
overwhelms me
as tears
turn to ice
on my ruby cheeks.

Grandpa's Blues

Eyes liquid lapis--
descended through time.
Icebergs, sharply
frozen in hue.
With age, gently melting--
softer, fainter, less.
I see them everywhere--
no need to close mine.
Always here. Always
looking at me, with me.
Sighing.

Hope

I had a dream
of you and me standing
in a field of yellow
daisies that danced
with a beautiful breeze.
You turned to me with soft
eyes and gave me your heart
nestled within a dew-kissed
blossom. Then, the wind
came and led us
to the sea of tomorrow.
And we sailed away.
